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BATMAN
485
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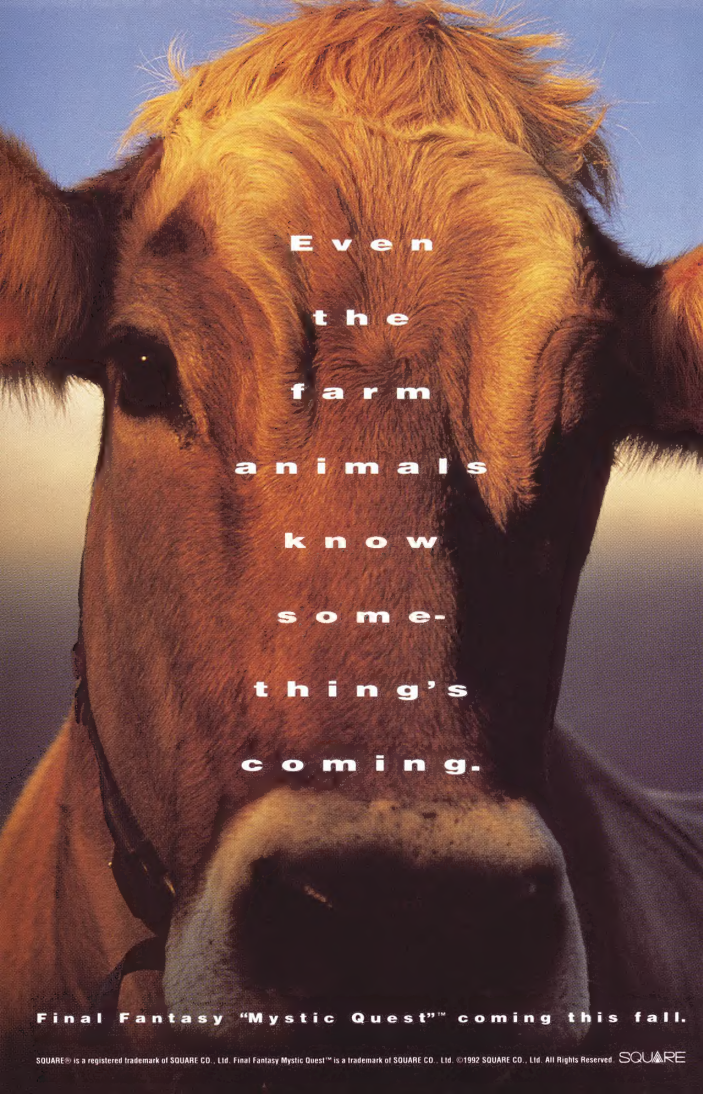

Final Fantasy "Mystic Quest"™ coming this fall.

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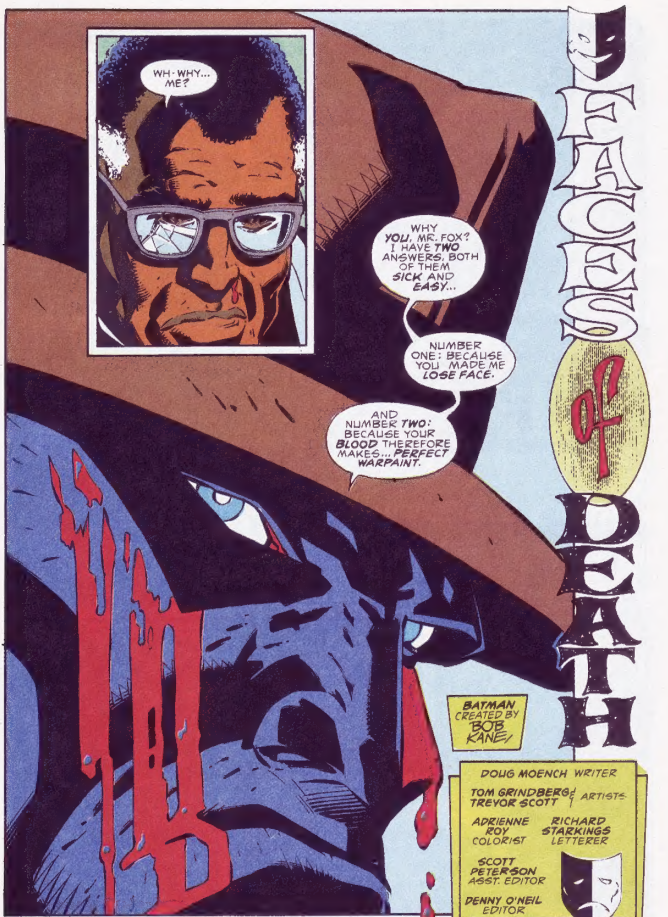
WH-WHY... ME?
WHY YOU, MR. FOX? I HAVE TWO ANSWERS, BOTH OF THEM SICK AND EASY...
NUMBER ONE: BECAUSE YOU MADE ME LOSE FACE.
AND NUMBER TWO: BECAUSE YOUR BLOOD THEREFORE MAKES... PERFECT WARPAINT.
9 FACES of DEATH
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE
DOUG MOENCH WRITER
TOM GRINDBERG & TREVOR SCOTT ARTISTS
ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST
RICHARD STARKINGS LETTERER
SCOTT PETERSON ASST. EDITOR
DENNY O'NEIL EDITOR

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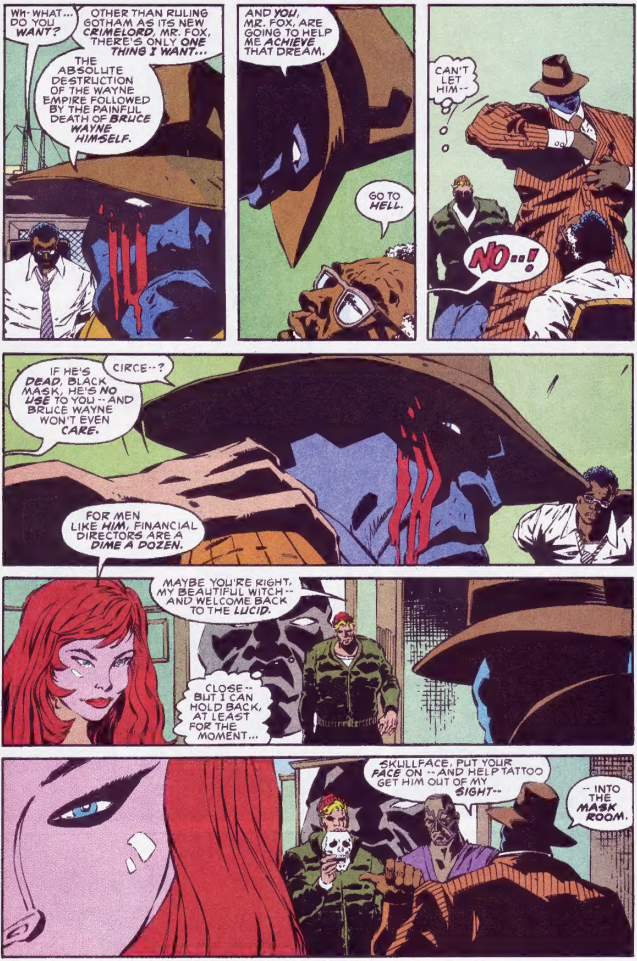
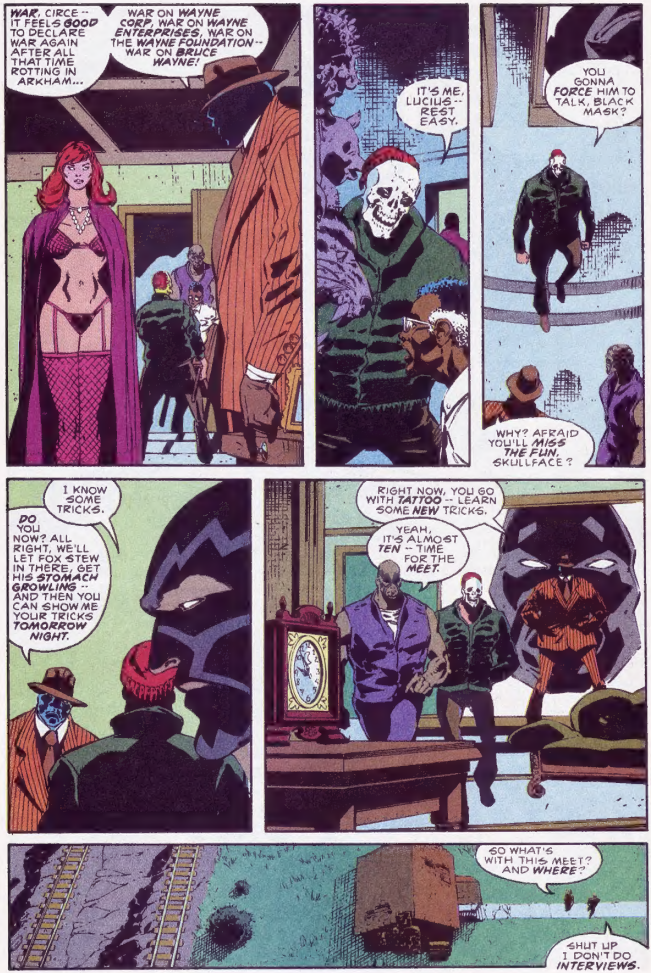
CAREFUL, LUCIUS -- HE'S WIRED TIGHT... READY TO SNAP...
I... DON'T... UNDERSTAND...
DON'T PLAY THE FOOL WITH ME, FOX!
YOU KNOW WHO I AM -- BLACK MASK, THE FORMER ROMAN SIONIS, OWNER OF THE JANUS CORPORATION --
-- AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO ME!

Wuh-WE... BAILED YOU OUT...

YOU FORCED ME OUT -- AND PUT BRUCE WAYNE PUPPETS IN CONTROL OF MY COMPANY.

MAY HAVE TO BLOW MY COVER -- MAKE A MOVE AT ANY MOMENT TO SPARE LUCIUS FURTHER PUNISH-MENT...


WH-WHAT... DO YOU WANT?
OTHER THAN RULING GOTHAM AS ITS NEW CRIMELORD, MR. FOX, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I WANT...
THE ABSOLUTE DESTRUCTION OF THE WAYNE EMPIRE FOLLOWED BY THE PAINFUL DEATH OF BRUCE WAYNE HIMSELF.
AND YOU, MR. FOX, ARE GOING TO HELP ME ACHIEVE THAT DREAM.
GO TO HELL.
CAN'T LET HIM--
NO..!
CIRCE..?
IF HE'S DEAD, BLACK MASK, HE'S NO USE TO YOU -- AND BRUCE WAYNE WON'T EVEN CARE.
FOR MEN LIKE HIM, FINANCIAL DIRECTORS ARE A DIME A DOZEN.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. MY BEAUTIFUL WITCH -- AND WELCOME BACK TO THE LUCID.
CLOSE -- BUT I CAN HOLD BACK, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT...
SKULLFACE, PUT YOUR FACE ON -- AND HELP TATTOO GET HIM OUT OF MY SIGHT--
-- INTO THE MASK ROOM.


WAR. CIRCE -- IT FEELS GOOD TO DECLARE WAR AGAIN AFTER ALL THAT TIME ROTTING IN ARKHAM...
WAR ON WAYNE CORP, WAR ON WAYNE ENTERPRISES, WAR ON THE WAYNE FOUNDATION -- WAR ON BRUCE WAYNE!
IT'S ME, LUCIUS -- REST EASY.
YOU GONNA FORCE HIM TO TALK, BLACK MASK?
WHY? AFRAID YOU'LL MISS THE FUN, SKULLFACE?
I KNOW SOME TRICKS.
DO YOU NOW? ALL RIGHT, WE'LL LET FOX STEW IN THERE, GET HIS STOMACH GROWLING -- AND THEN YOU CAN SHOW ME YOUR TRICKS TOMORROW NIGHT.
RIGHT NOW, YOU GO WITH TATTOO -- LEARN SOME NEW TRICKS.
YEAH, IT'S ALMOST TEN -- TIME FOR THE MEET.
SO WHAT'S WITH THIS MEET? AND WHERE?
SHUT UP I DON'T DO INTERVIEWS.

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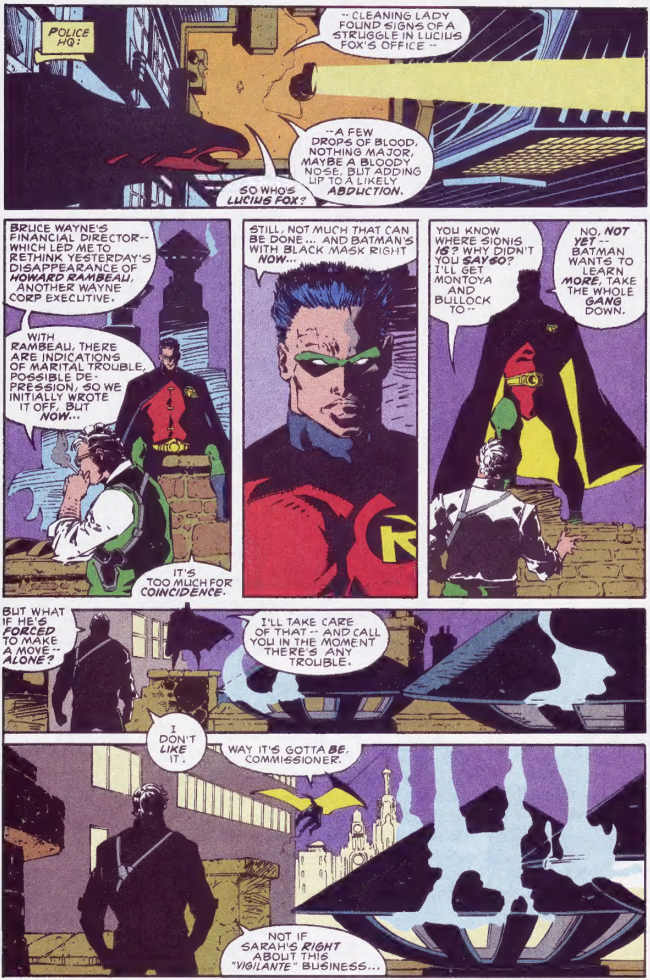
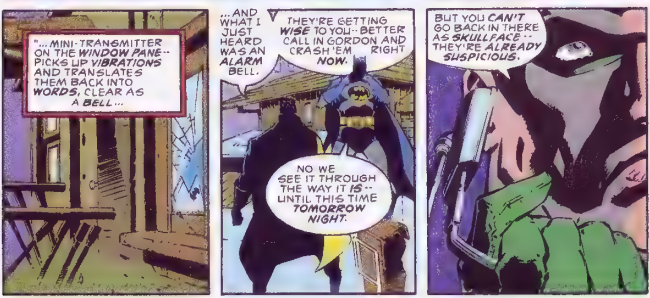

POLICE HQ:
-- CLEANING LADY FOUND SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE IN LUCIUS FOX'S OFFICE --
--A FEW DROPS OF BLOOD, NOTHING MAJOR, MAYBE A BLOODY NOSE, BUT ADDING UP TO A LIKELY ABDUCTION.
SO WHO'S LUCIUS FOX?
BRUCE WAYNE'S FINANCIAL DIRECTOR-- WHICH LED ME TO RETHINK YESTERDAY'S DISAPPEARANCE OF HOWARD RAMBEAU, ANOTHER WAYNE CORP EXECUTIVE.
WITH RAMBEAU, THERE ARE INDICATIONS OF MARITAL TROUBLE, POSSIBLE DEPRESSION, SO WE INITIALLY WROTE IT OFF. BUT NOW...
IT'S TOO MUCH FOR COINCIDENCE.
STILL, NOT MUCH THAT CAN BE DONE... AND BATMAN'S WITH BLACK MASK RIGHT NOW...
YOU KNOW WHERE SIONIS IS? WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO? I'LL GET MONTOYA AND BULLOCK TO --
NO, NOT YET. BATMAN WANTS TO LEARN MORE, TAKE THE WHOLE GANG DOWN.
BUT WHAT IF HE'S FORCED TO MAKE A MOVE-- ALONE?
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT -- AND CALL YOU IN THE MOMENT THERE'S ANY TROUBLE.
I DON'T LIKE IT.
WAY IT'S GOTTA BE, COMMISSIONER.
NOT IF SARAH'S RIGHT ABOUT THIS "VIGILANTE" BUSINESS...

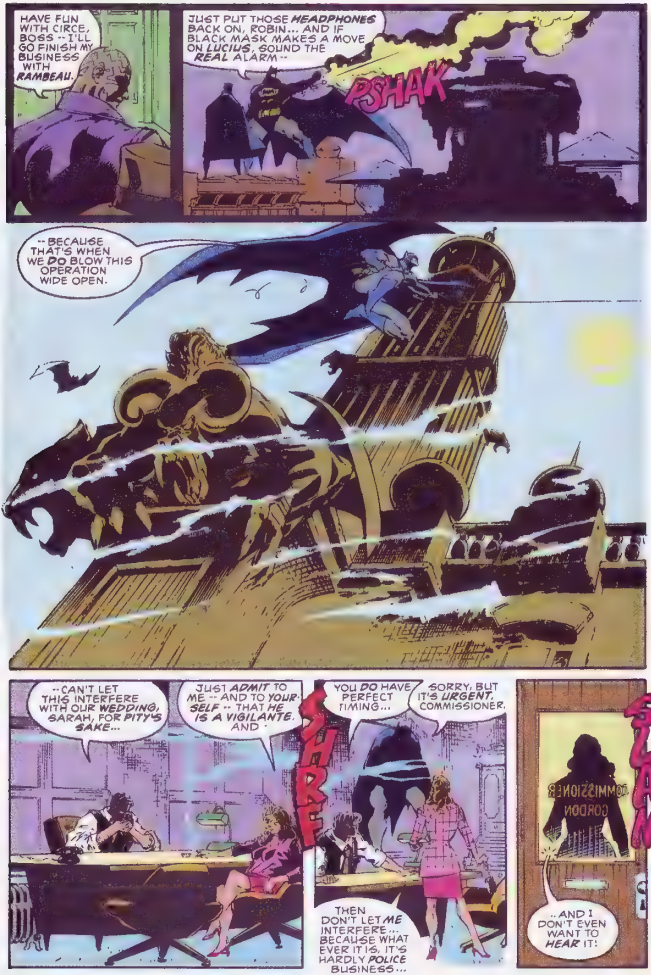
LOANS
PAWN
HARKEY
SO JUST HOW MANY SOLDIERS ARE IN THE FALSE FACE SOCIETY?
ENOUGH--AND MORE EVERY DAY.
THEY ALL GONNA BE AT THIS MEET?
I ALREADY SAID--YOU ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS.
BEER NUTS
BEER NUTS
ALL RIGHT, SHUT UP AND LISTEN!
THE ARGON STUFF IS OFF FOR NOW-- THE BOSS JUST GOT A NEW ANGLE ON GETTIN' AT BRUCE WAYNE-- SO WE'RE GONNA START PAINTIN' THE LARGER PICTURE...
EXTORTION, DRUGS, HIJACKING... EVENTUALLY MOVIN' IN ON ALL THE EXISTING RACKETS IN THIS TOWN...
YOU MEAN, LIKE, FINALLY MAKIN' SOME MONEY?
ABOUT TIME--I WAS GETTIN' PRETTY SICK O' THIS SETTIN' FIRES FOR REVENGE GARBAGE!
WHERE'S YOUR MASK?

YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT MY MASK -- I'M DISGUISED AS ME, A SMART GUY.
EVERYBODY IN THIS ORGANIZATION WEARS A MASK.
EXCEPT SMART GUYS LIKE ME WHO THINK MASKS ARE STUPID.
YEAH -- WHY DO WE GOTTA WEAR THESE DUMB THINGS?
A REVOLT -- INTERESTING TO SEE HOW HE'LL HANDLE IT...
WE WEAR 'EM 'CAUSE BLACK MASK SAYS SO -- AND 'CAUSE HE'S GOT ME TO ENFORCE WHATEVER HE SAYS.
ANYONE DOESN'T WEAR A MASK, GETS HIS FACE TURNED INTO A MASK.
SKUK
THRAK
KUNCH

AS FAST AS ME IN MY PRIME.. AND I'VE BEEN SLOWING DOWN.
EVEN WITH A MASK, FACING HIM WON'T BE EASY.
SAME TIME AND PLACE TOMORROW NIGHT FOR SPECIFICS...
AND DON'T FORGET YOUR MASKS.
..MEET GOT BUSTED UP BY A LITTLE DISRUPTION, SO I HAD TO POSTPONE THE BATTLE PLANS.
DISRUPTION?
I PUT IT DOWN.
I SEE. AND SKULL-FACE... DID YOU HELP TATTOO?
IT WAS OVER BEFORE I COULD DECIDE IF HE NEEDED HELP.
VERY WELL, YOU CAN GO NOW, SKULL FACE.
BUT DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR TRICKS TOMORROW NIGHT MISTER FOX WILL BE WAITING

WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON SKULL-FACE?
HE MAY NOT BE A COP, BUT HE'S LIKE A BLACK CAT -- BAD LUCK AND TOO MUCH CURIOSITY.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT -- WE'LL SEE TOMORROW.
TOP FORTY?
SOMETHING HAROLD PUT TOGETHER -- BETTER THAN A DIRECTIONAL MIKE...


"...MINI-TRANSMITTER ON THE WINDOW PANE -- PICKS UP VIBRATIONS AND TRANSLATES THEM BACK INTO WORDS, CLEAR AS A BELL...
...AND WHAT I JUST HEARD WAS AN ALARM BELL.
THEY'RE GETTING WISE TO YOU. BETTER CALL IN GORDON AND CRASH 'EM RIGHT NOW.
NO. WE SEE IT THROUGH THE WAY IT IS -- UNTIL THIS TIME TOMORROW NIGHT.
BUT YOU CAN'T GO BACK IN THERE AS SKULLFACE -- THEY'RE ALREADY SUSPICIOUS.


HAVE FUN WITH CIRCE, BOSS -- I'LL GO FINISH MY BUSINESS WITH RAMBEAU.
JUST PUT THOSE HEADPHONES BACK ON, ROBIN... AND IF BLACK MASK MAKES A MOVE ON LUCIUS, SOUND THE REAL ALARM --
PSHAK
-- BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN WE DO BLOW THIS OPERATION WIDE OPEN.
-- CAN'T LET THIS INTERFERE WITH OUR WEDDING, SARAH, FOR PITY'S SAKE...
JUST ADMIT TO ME -- AND TO YOURSELF -- THAT HE IS A VIGILANTE. AND
SHRE
YOU DO HAVE PERFECT TIMING...
SORRY, BUT IT'S URGENT, COMMISSIONER.
THEN DON'T LET ME INTERFERE... BECAUSE WHAT EVER IT IS, IT'S HARDLY POLICE BUSINESS...
SLAM
COMMISSIONER GORDON
.. AND I DON'T EVEN WANT TO HEAR IT!

GREEN LANTERN:

GANTHET'S TALE

A STORY SO EPIC IT REQUIRED TWO GREAT TALENTS TO TELL IT

LARRY NIVEN JOHN BYRNE

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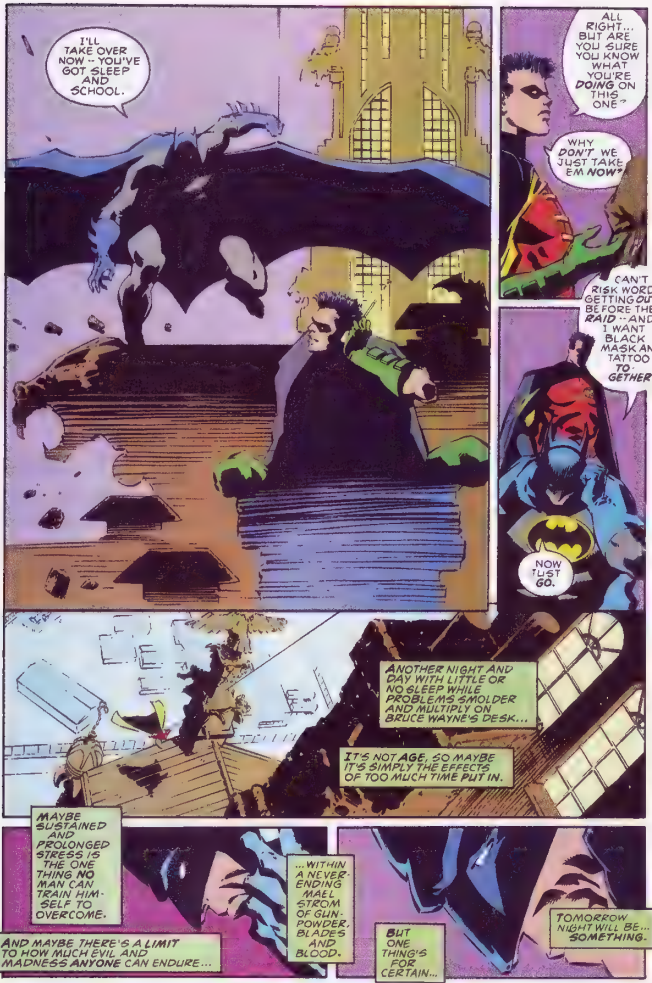
AND JUST WHAT IS SO URGENT THAT IT COST ME A VERY LATE DINNER WITH THE WOMAN I'M GOING TO MARRY?
SHARKEY'S POOL HALL, TEN O'CLOCK TOMORROW NIGHT.
A FULL-SCALE RAID SHOULD NET YOU A GOOD THREE-QUARTERS OR MORE OF THE FALSE FACE SOCIETY.
M-HM...
... WHILE YOU'LL BE TAKING OTHER MATTERS INTO YOUR OWN HANDS.
BLACK MASK HIMSELF MUST BE BROUGHT DOWN, GORDON.
I WILL NOT FAIL IN THAT.
BUT EVEN THOUGH YOU KNOW WHERE TO BRING HIM DOWN, IT'S INFORMATION YOU'RE UNWILLING TO SHARE.
I THOUGHT WE WERE FINISHED WITH WORD GAMES A LONG TIME AGO.
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE PURSUED IT TO A DIFFERENT FINISH.
ALL RIGHT...
VIGILANTE OR NOT, MY SOLE CONCERN IS SAVING LIVES WHILE BRINGING EVIL DOWN. FAIR ENOUGH?
I'M NOT SURE EITHER OF US KNOWS THE ANSWER TO THAT.
BUT YOU'LL HANDLE THE RAID ON THE MASK GANG?
IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO -- AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
I'M SORRY. BUT THIS THING'S ALREADY IN MOTION -- AND THAT'S THE BEST I CAN DO.


I'LL TAKE OVER NOW -- YOU'VE GOT SLEEP AND SCHOOL.
ALL RIGHT... BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING ON THIS ONE?
WHY DON'T WE JUST TAKE 'EM NOW?
CAN'T RISK WORD GETTING OUT BEFORE THE RAID -- AND I WANT BLACK MASK AND TATTOO TO. GETHER.
NOW JUST GO.
ANOTHER NIGHT AND DAY WITH LITTLE OR NO SLEEP WHILE PROBLEMS SMOLDER AND MULTIPLY ON BRUCE WAYNE'S DESK...
IT'S NOT AGE, SO MAYBE IT'S SIMPLY THE EFFECTS OF TOO MUCH TIME PUT IN.
MAYBE SUSTAINED AND PROLONGED STRESS IS THE ONE THING NO MAN CAN TRAIN HIMSELF TO OVERCOME.
AND MAYBE THERE'S A LIMIT TO HOW MUCH EVIL AND MADNESS ANYONE CAN ENDURE...
...WITHIN A NEVER-ENDING MAELSTROM OF GUNPOWDER, BLADES AND BLOOD.
BUT ONE THING'S FOR CERTAIN...
TOMORROW NIGHT WILL BE... SOMETHING.

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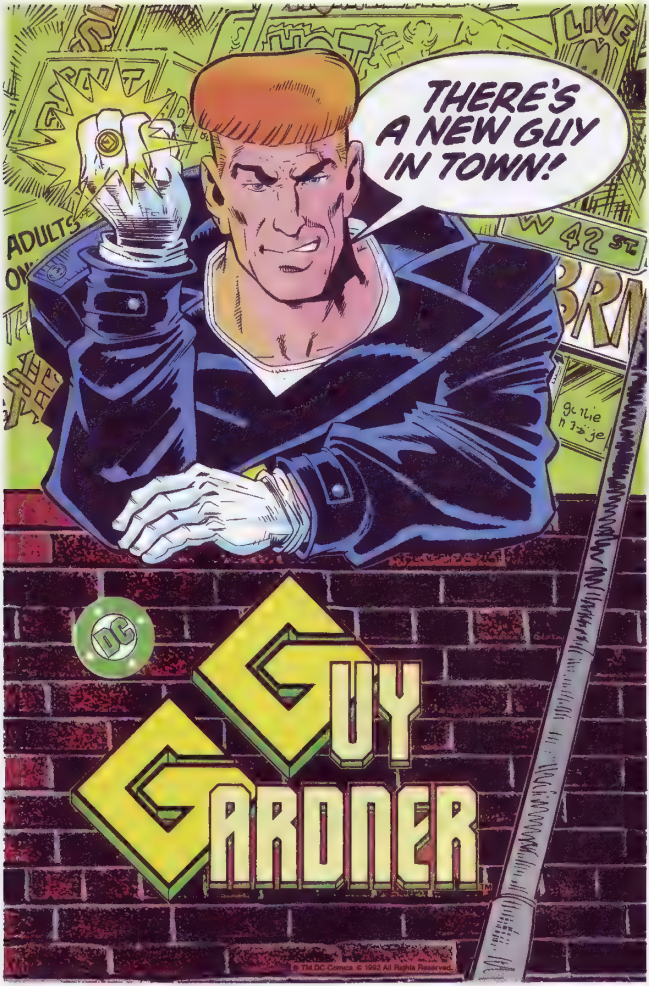
THERE'S A NEW GUY IN TOWN!
ADULTS
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GUY GARDNER
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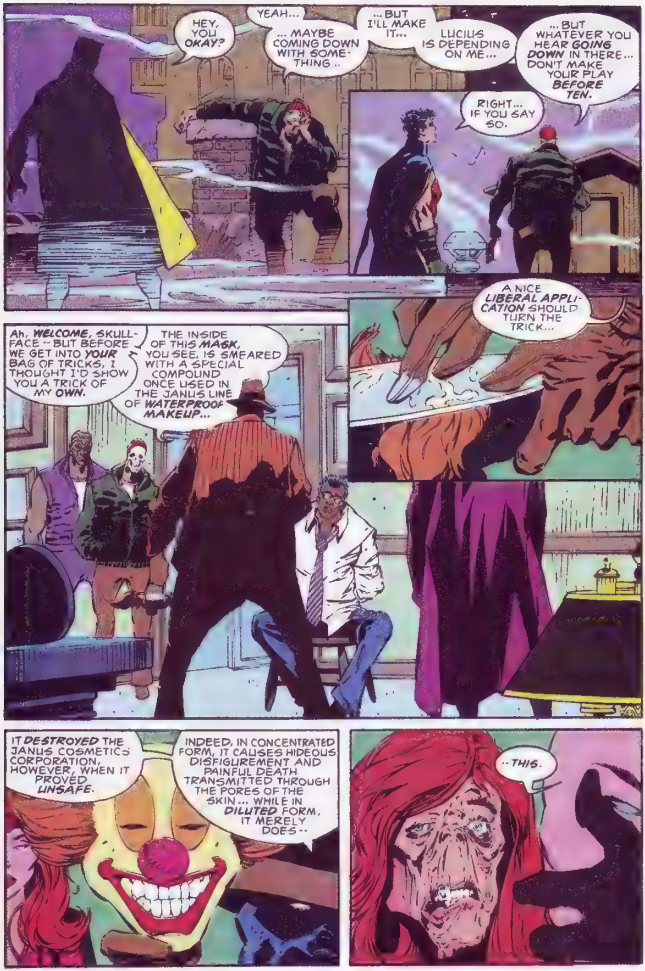
ALL RIGHT, RAMBEAU, I'M FINALLY HOME...
...AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN GETTING STIFF IN SUCH CLOSE QUARTERS, HAVEN'T YOU?
KHUMP
SORRY I TOOK SO LONG, BUT WE'RE READY TO GET DOWN TO SOME SERIOUS WORK NOW, AREN'T WE?
SURE WE ARE.
GOT HERE AS SOON AS I COULD, AND IT SEEMS NONE TOO SOON...
YOU LOOK BAD--
-BETTER GET SOME REST.
JUST MAKE SURE YOU WAKE ME...
YEAH, I KNOW, WHEN--
IT'S TIME
HHNNN


HEY, YOU OKAY?
YEAH... ... MAYBE COMING DOWN WITH SOMETHING..
...BUT I'LL MAKE IT...
LUCIUS IS DEPENDING ON ME...
...BUT WHATEVER YOU HEAR GOING DOWN IN THERE... DON'T MAKE YOUR PLAY BEFORE TEN.
RIGHT... IF YOU SAY SO.
A NICE LIBERAL APPLICATION SHOULD TURN THE TRICK...
Ah, WELCOME, SKULLFACE -- BUT BEFORE WE GET INTO YOUR BAG OF TRICKS, I THOUGHT I'D SHOW YOU A TRICK OF MY OWN.
THE INSIDE OF THIS MASK, YOU SEE, IS SMEARED WITH A SPECIAL COMPOUND ONCE USED IN THE JANUS LINE OF WATERPROOF MAKEUP...
IT DESTROYED THE JANUS COSMETICS CORPORATION, HOWEVER, WHEN IT PROVED UNSAFE.
INDEED, IN CONCENTRATED FORM, IT CAUSES HIDEOUS DISFIGUREMENT AND PAINFUL DEATH TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE PORES OF THE SKIN... WHILE IN DILUTED FORM, IT MERELY DOES --
..THIS.

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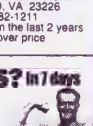

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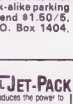

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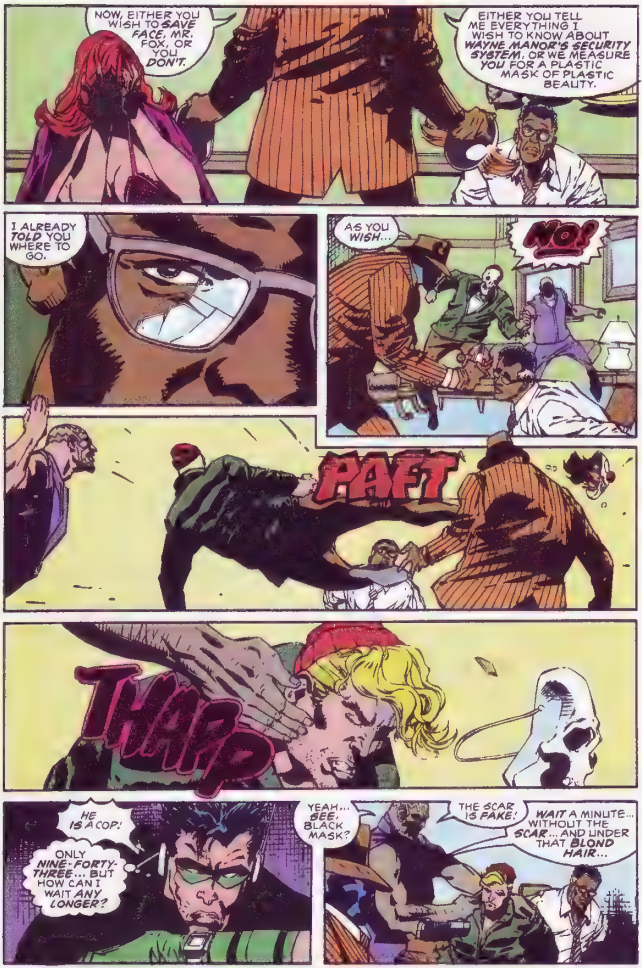
NOW, EITHER YOU WISH TO SAVE FACE, MR. FOX, OR YOU DON'T.
EITHER YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING I WISH TO KNOW ABOUT WAYNE MANOR'S SECURITY SYSTEM, OR WE MEASURE YOU FOR A PLASTIC MASK OF PLASTIC BEAUTY.
I ALREADY TOLD YOU WHERE TO GO.
AS YOU WISH...
NO!
PAFT
THAP
HE IS A COP.
ONLY NINE-FORTY-THREE... BUT HOW CAN I WAIT ANY LONGER?
YEAH... SEE, BLACK MASK?
THE SCAR IS FAKE!
WAIT A MINUTE... WITHOUT THE SCAR... AND UNDER THAT BLOND HAIR...

YES -- IT'S BRUCE WAYNE HIMSELF -- RIGHT HERE!
YOU'RE DEAD, YOU STINKING SON OF A--
NOOO!!
BRAM
WHUKT
PHPHPHPHPHPHPHPHT
KREE
PHOOM
SSSSSSSS
SSSSSSS

GET LUCILLE OUT OF HERE AND CALL AN AMBULANCE FOR CIRCE -- I'M GOING BACK IN.
BUT--
THEY'VE GOT TO BE PRE-OCCUPIED UNTIL THE POLICE RAID GOES OFF!
I LIKE RAIDS, MONTOYA -- THE WAITIN', THE SUSPENSE -- BETTER'N HITCHCOCK CUZ IT'S REAL, GETS MY BLOOD HIGH!...
I ... AN' WHEN MY BLOOD GETS HIGH, IT MAKES ME WONDER WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' AFTER THE RAID?
SHARKEY'S
GOING SOMEWHERE TO CLEAR MY LUNGS OF YOU.
GAWRUMPH!
PUT IT DOWN, BLACK MASK -- YOU'RE FINISHED!
THAT'S THE BATMAN'S VOICE! I KNOW IT IS! WAYNE'S MONEY CAN BUY ANYONE!
EASY, BOSS! DON'T WASTE THE--
BRAM BRAM BRAM
--GUN.
WIK

COME ON -- OUTTA THE SMOKE!
BUT THE GUN!
NO TIME! JUST GET OUT IN THE CLEAR! I'M A MATCH FOR ANYONE--
-- LONG AS I CAN SEE HIM...
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
GOTHAM TOWER TOLLING TEN... AND NOW, WHATEVER HAPPENS BETWEEN ME AND TATTOO...
AT LEAST THE RAID WILL GO OFF.
TEN O'CLOCK! GO, GO GO!
SHARKEY'S
SO WHERE'S TATTOO? HE'S LATE.
YEAH, AND I WANNA HEAR SOME DETAILS ON ALL THIS MONEY WE'RE GONNA--
BWAKK
POLICE -- FREEZE!

I THINK WE'RE IN THE CLEAR, BOSS
I THINK WE LOST HHHUPHH!
SWAMP
BASH
KLAK LAK AAK!
I--I'LL BE ALL RIGHT SMOSTLY HUNGER...
FIRST BLOOD. TATTOO.. FIRST BLOOD!
STUNNED.. EXHAUSTED..

WHUMP
HUT
MY GOD... WHAT HAPPENED TO HER FACE?
YOU DID IT! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FINISH HIM OFF!
TRY IT
SUUUNT
YES!

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I GO DOWN...
...FOR NO ONE!
THROK
YOUR TURN...
N-NO--!
NOOOOOOOOOO
SPLASH

EPILOGUE:
WE'RE BOOKING THE TATTOOED ONE ALONG WITH THE OTHERS MONTOYA AND BULLOCK BROUGHT IN--
WHICH LOOKS TO BE MOST OF THE MASK GANG-- BUT...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT--?
JUST TIRED... SORE...
... BUT YOUR DIVERS DID GET BLACK MASK OUT OF THE RIVER... AND WE DIDN'T FAIL?
UM... BAD NEWS ON THAT SCORE, I'M AFRAID...
THE "BLACK MASK" THEY DRAGGED UP IS NOT ROMAN SIONIS.
WHAT?
NO WATER IN HIS LUNGS -- DEAD BEFORE HE HIT THE RIVER--
--AND THE "MASK" ON HIS FACE ISN'T BURNED ON...
...IT'S SOME SORT OF... TATTOO DYE.
BUT... WHO WAS HE?
ACCORDING TO DENTAL RECORDS, HOWARD RAMBEAU, THE MISSING WAYNE CORP EXECUTIVE!
THEN...
YEAH.
I'LL INFORM RAMBEAU'S FAMILY... BUT IN THE MEANTIME, GOTHAM'S NEWEST WOULD-BE GANG LORD IS STILL AT LARGE.
AND THE WAR... IS MERELY ON HOLD.
I DID FAIL.
NEXT: METALHEAD

BAT-SIGNALS

DC COMICS INC.
1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019

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Dear Bat-Staff,

Recently I bought BATMAN #477—part one of "A Gotham Tale." It was brilliant! Everything about it was top class, and I mean *tops!* I had never heard of the Gargoyle before I read this issue, but I think that he could possibly do some good in future issues.

Tom Taggart's cover job really catches the eye. I've been collecting comic books for ten years and not once have I seen a cover this detailed. I would have to say that it is about as close as anyone could possibly come to making a character real—without taking a photo, of course!

As far as the story and art go, I would have to give Wagner and Kennedy two thumbs up! Actually, the staff as a whole really keeps the Bob Kane legend going. Go, guys!

Oh, one question: Is Robin going to have another solo series? And, if so, when?

Patrick Kelley
St. Marys, GA

Robin is indeed going to have another miniseries by the same winning team of Dixon/Lyle/Smith, and it should be out in November.

Dear Denny, Kelley and folks,

What a terrific cover on #477! I felt like I could reach right into it. I hope that you will do more of these covers whenever possible. Terrific cliffhanger ending to this. I will be back for the next part, be sure of that. I was surprised that Batman didn't just knock all three of them out, though. Sleeping people use much less oxygen, probably sufficiently less to keep them alive the requisite amount of time. No complaints, though. This makes for a much better story than that would. I mean, this is a comic book—a great one, too, I might add. Keep these great stories coming, and hey! How about going two issues a month for the whole year?! Until next time...

Carl Pietrantonio
Laredo, TX

Dear DC,

I loved the cover of BATMAN #477! It looks so real! It looks as if I could reach into the cover and touch Batman. I hope the next Batman cover will be done in the same style. "A Gotham Tale" could prove a very interesting story. If Batman is going to save Miss Creighton, he'd better hurry! Those tranquilizer darts are going to hit her hand in a split second. I hear the sequel to the Batman movie is going to be in theatres pretty soon. I hope it's good. By the way, what does DC stand for? Thanks for listening!

Travis Krouse
Mackinaw, IL

DC stands for quality. Okay, it really stands for Detective Comics—which you of course read each and every month.

Dear Bat-Signals,

You guys are so benevolent! I thought that the cover for BATMAN #477 was excellent! And the artwork inside was benevolent!! OK, enough sucking up. I have one question: Why did Batman throw his batarang when Miss Creighton was about to commit suicide?

Oh, yeah, I still have a few more things to say: Please, please, please print my letter, I need something to show off to everyone. Well, that's about all I have to say except keep up the good work and party on!

Mike Crockett
Snowlow, AZ

P.S. Hello to Harper and Chris.

Hello, Harper and Chris.

Dear Bat-Signals,

I just finished BATMAN #477, and I have three questions:

1) Have there been any appearances by the Gargoyle in the past?

2) The body's functions, such as breathing, slow down when a person goes to sleep. If they had three tranquilizers amongst them, why didn't they just each use one on themselves?

3) I loved the cover. Are there going to be any more photo covers?

Chris Waltz
Marble, MN

This was the very first appearance of the Gargoyle—and you were there. Other than #478, there are no current plans for more photo covers, but let us know what you think. By the by, Tom's done lots of other stuff for DC, including some WHO'S WHO entries, and covers for DOOM PATROL and SWAMP THING.

Dear Batfolk,

Gotta tell ya, BATMAN #477 was, in my opinion, a disgrace. Batman would never, NEVER suggest such a stupid game to decide who should live and who dies. Totally out of character, that. How many hundreds of times have I seen the Caped Crusader offer his life to protect others, without hesitation? You have defiled years of heroism and nobility with one absurd move. Is this the Batman, or the Demon in disguise? And to top it off, I see no need to write things this way. The three could have been telling stories just to pass the time, and some other method of suicide on the girl's part could have been introduced rather than Batman's darts.

So, tell me why you did this thing? I know there is a move to a grittier Darknight Detective these days and I approve, but there is no reason to discard the heroic self-sacrificing character of the Batman that has made us love him all these years. I can only imagine some youngster seeing this as one of his first Batman stories, and finding no reason to admire the title character as anything more than a violent thug-basher. Please remember, he is first and foremost a hero.

Oh yeah, great cover!

Ken Altabef
New York, NY

P.S. I almost forgot to mention that lame batarang throw on the last page that looks to be off by at least 90 degrees.

Stay tuned...

Dear Bat-Signals,

Issue #477 was great. The cover was awesome and it was the first thing that grabbed me at the comics store. I was hoping the story would be as good and I wasn't disappointed. I really enjoyed it and am looking forward to the next issue. What is the story on the cover? You didn't say anything about it in the book. I also like the artwork through the story. You guys are doing a great job. Keep up the good work.

Tim Crowe
Harrisomething, TW(?)

Tom sculpted the Batman and Gargoyle figures, built the church, put them together, painted a background, and took a picture. And all in about 3 weeks. What a guy.

Dear Bat-Signals,

This is the first time I have written to Bat-Signals, but I had to tell you that BATMAN #477 was one of the best comics I had read in a long time. I thought the art was great and the cover was great, too. I was wondering if you are going to have any more covers like it in the future.

Joey Skaradek
Gambrills, MD

See the answer to Chris's letter. And keep writing, Joey; the more the merrier.

Dear Kelley,

I was very pleased to see John Wagner's name on the cover of BATMAN #477, as I thought the stories he wrote along with Grant were some of Batman's best. The first part of "A Gotham Tale" was no exception, as the premise of the story was very interesting. I'm not really familiar with Cam Kennedy, but his artwork seemed well suited for Batman.

It was nice to see that Wagner didn't have Batman immediately offer to be the victim when they realized one of them had to die. Some might say this is out of character for the hero. This might be true, but at least it gives Batman a bit of unpredictability, instead of being the stereotyped hero who believes everyone else's life is automatically more important or valuable than his own.

It did seem that Batman's acceptance that one of them had to die was a bit abrupt. Even a panel or two of him brooding over it or attempting another idea would have made it a bit more effective. Then again, there was a time when the writer would simply have had Batman pull some impossibly powerful laser from his utility belt and cut through the door.

The cover was unique and caught my eye right away. I hope John Wagner's name shows up in the Batman titles more often. I would love to see what he could do with one of the "Elseworlds" projects. Keep up the good work.

Rob Sagirs
Audubon, NJ

JIM APARO FAN CLUB: Regular letterhack Chris Khalaf has teamed up with Mike Gallaher to produce the Jim Aparo Fan Club Newsletter (an idea I wholeheartedly endorse). They would love to hear from anyone even mildly interested in the work of this incredible artist (okay, so I'm a huge fan—so what?). Send all inquiries, suggestions, submissions and sandwiches to: The Jim Aparo Fan Club Newsletter, PO Box 925142, Houston, TX 77292-5142. Hurry, now...operators are standing by.

Cover pencilled, inked and colored by Michael Golden.

OVER IN SHADOW: The Shadow of the Bat falls on...the Black Spider, a reformed heroin addict who's trying to get his girlfriend and mother of his child to kick the habit before it's too late, and is willing to use any means necessary...even the murder of drug dealers. Can the Batman stop him? Will he? Find out in SHADOW OF THE BAT #5, on sale now, by Alan Grant and Norm Breyfogle.

OVER IN DETECTIVE: Who is the most hated man in Gotham City? Well, next to the Batman, it's Harvey Bullock. Someone's trying to assassinate him, and with half the city as suspects, Bullock reluctantly turns to the world's greatest detective. But can even the Batman figure this one out? It's DETECTIVE COMICS #651, "A Bullet for Bullock," on sale now, and brought to you by Chuck Dixon and Scott Hanna and guest penciller Graham Nolan.

NEXT ISSUE: There's someone looking for Black Mask and it's not the Batman. He wants to join Black Mask's gang and doesn't care who he has to kill to do it. Be there when the Dark Knight meets Metalhead, in BATMAN #486, by Doug Moench and Jim Aparo.

—Scott Peterson getting very sleepy...sleepy...

From the Den

Some days, they say, you can't make a dime and some days I believe them, whoever they are.

I mean, we *caught* the mistake. Two of us caught it. Fred Ruiz, from the production department, and our own Scott Peterson both looked at a proof and saw that a double-page spread in the third issue of SHADOW OF THE BAT had been broken in two by an ill-placed ad. Well, okay, these things happen and no harm done—when a goof is caught before a book goes to press, it can be fixed. So Scott and Fred did what should be done and we all forgot about the incident.

Until we got printed copies of the magazine and saw—

Yeah, the spread bisected by the ad and thus rendered incomprehensible to all but readers astute enough to realize what had happened and patient enough to mentally construct how the pages *should* have appeared. So Scott's and Fred's efforts were for nothing.

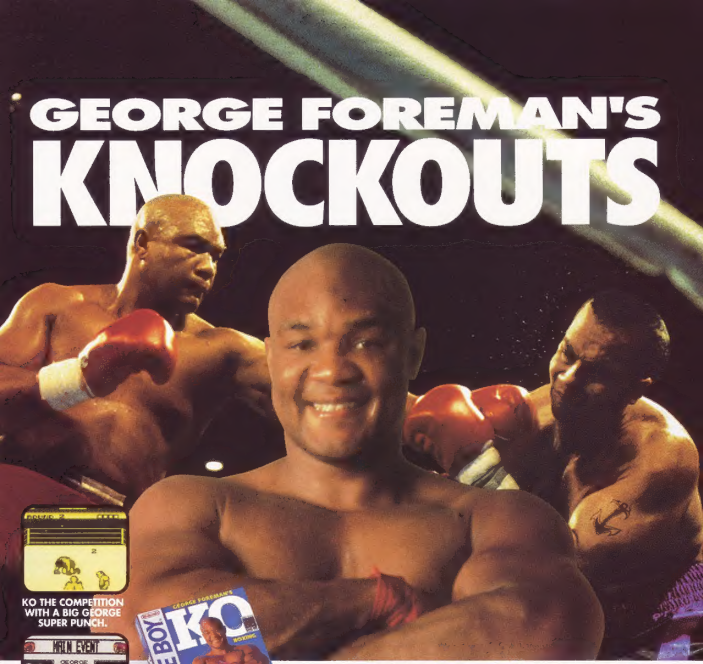
I have no idea what happened. We *thought* we had a foolproof system for preventing this kind of misery. So we'll look at that system, again, hard, and then we'll write memos and change procedures and hope that *this* time we have it nailed.

Meanwhile, apologies are owed to Norm Breyfogle, who worked far harder than anyone expected him to in designing the book's layout and had every reason to believe he had delivered something pretty special, only to find his labors were for nothing, and to everyone who read the book.

We can only hope you enjoyed it anyway.

Denny

GEORGE FOREMAN'S KNOCKOUTS



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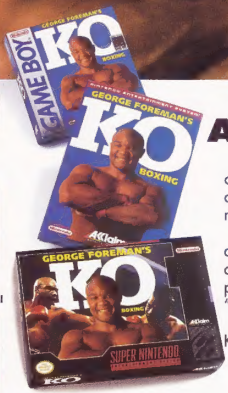

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